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Pan-American Possibilities

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## PAN-AMERICAN POSSIBILITIES

*By John Barrett, Director-General of the Pan-American Union, formerly United States Minister to Siam, Argentina, Panama and Colombia*

We are at the beginning of a great Pan-American era. The next ten years are going to be Pan-American years. As during the past fifteen years Asia has been very much to the front, causing our eyes to be constantly on Japan, China, and the Philippines, so now during the next decade we shall be looking largely at the countries of Central and South America.

You will pardon me for speaking with both earnestness and enthusiasm. For fourteen years I have been studying Latin-American potentialities and progress. During the first seven of these years it was my privilege, as United States minister in Argentina, Panama and Colombia, to study that part of the world intimately from the standpoint of a United States minister. During the last seven years, as the executive officer of the Pan-American Union, it has been my duty to study every republic of the western hemisphere from its own standpoint as well as from the standpoint of other countries and peoples. At first I found it extremely difficult to awaken the interest and draw the attention of universities like this one, of public schools, of newspapers, of magazines, of lecturers, of writers, of travelers, and of business men. They did not seem to care for Latin America. They did not appreciate what these twenty countries south of us meant to the United States.

But a great change has now come. The Pan-American Union is almost reaping the whirlwind of its pioneer efforts and all the world seems anxious to know more of the Latin-American countries and peoples. The demand for information about all of them, their commerce and trade, their institutions, their agricultural, mineral and timber resources,

their material and economic possibilities, their industrial development, and their educational advancement is almost beyond the capacity of the Pan-American Union to meet. Where there was one article in a newspaper a few years ago about Latin-American countries, their politics and possibilities, there are now a score of articles. Where then one magazine had a stray paper on Latin America, nearly every magazine is now describing that field. In contrast to only a few universities, colleges, academies and high schools taking up the study of Spanish six or seven years ago, there is a multitude of them all over the country teaching this language. Where one traveler seeking entertainment and amusement went to Central and South America ten years ago, a dozen are now going. Where one exporter or importer went personally to investigate the Latin-American field a decade ago, a score are now going. It is remarkable, moreover, that during the last ten or twelve years the value of the exchange of products between the United States and Latin America has increased nearly 100 per cent, until it has reached a surprising total of approximately \$850,000,000.

Remembering that commerce is often called the life blood of nations, it is well to note that the twenty countries of Latin America last year bought and sold in the markets of the world products valued in excess of \$2,500,000,000. This in turn represents an increase of nearly \$1,000,000,000 in the last decade. These figures are all the more remarkable when we remember that all of these countries lie south of the great eastern and western routes of trade and travel—that it is only within the last five years that there has really been a world appreciation of Latin America—and that the Panama Canal with its great future effect on trade is not yet opened. Surely the most skeptical person must give Latin America credit for these facts and figures.

While considering some data concerning commerce, let us remember that these twenty countries which reach from northern Mexico and Cuba south to Argentina and Chile cover a combined area of nearly 9,000,000 of square miles which is equal to an area nearly three times that of the United States proper. They support a population of 70,000,-

000 which is growing faster by reproduction than is the 100,000,000 population of the United States.

If, on the other hand, we are influenced by sentiment—and we should be—it is well to bear in mind that the majority of these countries secured their independence under the leadership of generals and patriots who, in their own biographies, state that they were inspired to make their fight by the example of the immortal George Washington of the United States. It should also be borne in mind that the majority of these countries have written their constitutions upon the constitution of the United States. While these sentimental facts may make the people of the United States proud, they should also cause them to look appreciatingly and without a patronizing attitude towards the Latin-American countries, their peoples and their institutions. The latter should be given credit for the astonishing progress they have made despite many adverse conditions of location, climate and population. They must be given credit for the high class civilization that is developed in many of them. It must not be forgotten that Lima, Peru, had a university, that of San Carlos, which was nearly a hundred years old before John Harvard or Eli Yale founded the universities which carry their illustrious names. While our average professors and students may not be familiar with the literature of Latin America, that part of the world has in reality a list of historians, essayists, poets, novelists, writers on international law and scientific subjects which would surprise the average North American if he were to investigate the roll of honor and achievement of Latin America.

There are some bogies about the countries the peoples and the commerce of Central and South America which should be destroyed. One is that there is an overwhelming sentiment in Latin America against the United States. While it is true that certain newspaper writers and public speakers never lose an opportunity to arouse sentiment against the United States, they correspond exactly to a certain class of newspaper writers and public speakers in the United States who are always attacking foreign countries and pursuing jingo tactics but who do not necessarily repre-

sent the sober public sentiment of the land. The big, strong, able and influential statesmen in the Latin-American republics have no bitter feeling against similar men in the United States, and are only too glad to coöperate with the corresponding men in the United States for the good of the western hemisphere. There is, it is true, a great deal of misinformation and prejudice throughout Latin America as far as the United States is concerned, but it can be removed by the pursuance of the right policy on the part of the government and people of the United States towards the peoples and governments of Latin America.

Another bogie is that the countries of Latin America are lands of revolution. There is a tendency to hold the six-pence of prejudice too near the eye in looking at the troubles in a few countries and thus not to see the prevailing peace in other lands. Two-thirds of the territory and area of Latin America have known no serious revolution in the last twenty-five years. Revolutions, moreover, are often grossly exaggerated in the reports which reach the United States.

Still another bogie is that there are no good mail and passenger steamship connections between the United States and the Latin-American countries. The answer to this is that the mail, passenger and freight facilities between the principal ports of the United States and all of the ten or eleven countries bordering on the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea are excellent and far better than the average person even dreams that they can be. While the service down the west coast of South America can be considerably improved, it is far better now than it was formerly and will probably be excellent soon after the canal is opened. As for the vessels plying, for example, between New York and the east coast ports of Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo and Buenos Aires, it can be said that there has been a hundred per cent improvement in the last few years, until almost every week vessels of first-class passenger accommodations are sailing with ample accommodations for passengers as well as freight. The steamships are not as large or as numerous as those which ply between Europe and the east coast of

South America because the conditions do not require it, but they are far better than is generally supposed.

There is also a bogie, prevailing in the minds of a majority of the people who have not studied carefully the geography of Latin America, that they are all hot or tropical countries. It is overlooked that the great southern end of South America, including southern Brazil, all of Uruguay, practically all of Argentina, and nearly all of Paraguay and Chile, are in the south temperate zone. It is also overlooked that in the countries right under the equator, or near it, there are remarkable plateaus in the Andes and other mountain ranges where the temperature remains the year around at about the temperature which prevails in Massachusetts in June and September. It is an interesting fact that if a man is on the seashore of Ecuador where the equator crosses South America, he can experience a greater change of climate by traveling inland and upland for five hours on the back of a mule than he can in traveling north or south for six days on the deck of a steamer! When I made a journey of nearly 2000 miles through the Andes of Colombia and Ecuador in the summer of 1906, during my incumbency of the post of minister of the United States at Bogota, the capital of Colombia, I had the unique experience of sleeping on the equator under three heavy blankets and being obliged to build a good fire in order to get warm in the morning! That was at an elevation of nearly 12,000 feet. In Bogota and Quito, which, are within a short distance of the equator as one looks at the map, I never saw the thermometer in the offices of the United States legations in those capitals go above 78°, while frequently at night it would go down to 60°, and yet both of these cities are located on plateaus, either of which could support a million or more population.

Now let me drive home one or two remarkable facts about each one of the Latin-American countries, so that the new student of Latin America who may hear or read what I am saying tonight will understand to some extent my interest in these republics.

Glancing at South America and first noting Brazil, we are impressed by the fact that it covers an area greater than

the connected area of the United States; that in the Amazon it has a river which empties into the ocean daily four times the volume of water which the Mississippi pours into the Gulf of Mexico, and that Rio de Janeiro, its capital, has already reached a population of 1,000,000 and is regarded as one of the show cities of the world.

Uruguay, lying between Brazil and Argentina, occupies a position in South America similar to that of Holland and Belgium in Europe. It is a land of remarkable progress, and its capital city, Montevideo, has a population of nearly 500,000.

Argentina covers an area larger than the entire section of the United States east of the Mississippi River. Its capital city, Buenos Aires, often called the "Paris of America," has a population of nearly 1,600,000. It is the largest city in the world south of the equator, the second Latin city, ranking after Paris, and the fourth city of the western hemisphere, following after New York, Chicago and Philadelphia. Argentina last year, with a population of approximately 9,000,000, conducted a foreign trade of \$900,000,000, which is greater than the foreign trade of Japan or China.

Chile extends for 2600 miles along the southern Pacific temperate coast of South America. Its capital, Santiago, is often called the "Paris of the Andes," and has a population of 500,000. The principal port of Chile, Valparaiso, is spending \$15,000,000 in preparing for the opening of the Panama Canal.

Paraguay, lying also between Brazil and Argentina, is a land of remarkable potentialities just starting upon a new era of agricultural development. Asunción, its capital, is one of the interesting cities of South America.

North of Argentina and northeast of Chile is Bolivia, covering an area twice that of the state of Texas and enjoying a period of remarkable mining and railroad development. La Paz, its capital, is the highest capital city in the world, but is connected by railroads with the ports of Chile and Peru on the Pacific Ocean.

Peru, lying northwest of Chile, has a reach on the Pacific Ocean equal to that of the whole Atlantic Coast of the



United States from Maine to Georgia, with a corresponding variety of products. Lima, its capital city, is famous for its culture and possesses the ancient University of San Carlos, to which I have already referred.

North of Peru is Ecuador, into which Massachusetts could be placed nearly ten times over. Its port, Guayaquil, will be one of the principal harbors on the Pacific south of the Panama Canal when it is made sanitary. Quito, its capital, is one of the old but attractive mountain cities of South America, and is connected with Guayaquil by a railroad which is a remarkable engineering achievement.

North of Ecuador, and the only country which has an extensive coast line on both the Atlantic and Pacific, is Colombia, with an area nearly equal to that of France and Spain combined. Bogota, its capital, located about 600 miles in the interior, is situated on a plateau nearly as large as the state of Connecticut. This city is noted for the culture of its people and the high quality of its civilization.

Venezuela, the most northern of the countries of the South American continent, is nearly as large as Colombia in area, and possesses within its limits the mighty valley of the Orinoco. Caracas, its capital, is one of the attractive cities of the so-called "Spanish Main" visited by the American traveler.

Turning now to the countries of Latin America which are in North America, we find that Panama has much to her credit aside from the Panama Canal, and is now entering upon a period of material and economic development which will be an influence other than the Panama Canal to advance its prosperity.

Costa Rica, northwest of Panama, is famous for its stability of government, having known no serious revolution since it was established as a republic. San José, its capital, is readily accessible by rail from the port of Limon on the Caribbean and is becoming more and more a point of visit by American travelers.

Nicaragua, north of Costa Rica, is a country of extraordinary natural possibilities, and, when once permanent peace is established, it will surely go ahead with rapid strides.



Managua, its capital, on the lake of similar name, is only awaiting the touch of a new material era to become a progressive city.

Honduras, lying north of Nicaragua, is another land of vast potentialities which only requires the construction of railways and investment of capital for opening up its interior to enter upon an era of prosperity. Tegucigalpa, its capital, when connected by railway with the Caribbean on the one side and the Pacific on the other is sure to evolve into a city of modern progress.

Salvador, the only Central American country bordering solely upon the Pacific Ocean, has the largest per capita population of any American country, and has enjoyed comparative peace and prosperity for a number of years. Its capital, San Salvador, is a prosperous city.

Guatemala, the most northern and western of the Central American Republics, has enjoyed a long period of peace which has been characterized by the construction of railways and the development of the interior, and has brought a large amount of capital into that country. Its capital, Guatemala City, is the largest of the Central American capitals and easily reached by railway from the Caribbean or Pacific sides.

Of Cuba, let it be said that it is justifying the confidence that has been placed in it as an independent republic and it is now going ahead with strides which are surprising to those who have not kept track of its onward movement. Havana, its capital, can not be classed as one of the great capitals of the western hemisphere, having passed the mark of two hundred and fifty thousand in population.

Of the Dominican Republic and Haiti, it can be said that they form one of the richest islands in the world, and, when once permanent peace and stability are established, they are sure to progress in a way that will astonish their critics. Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, and Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, are now in a process of evolution from the old to the new style of city and both are ports of importance upon the Caribbean. To Mexico I refer later on.

In making this survey I have only touched upon, as it

were, a few of the high points. The student will be expected to study each country carefully, and, if he does, he will discover facts and figures which will not only awaken his interest but cause him to become an advocate of more general appreciation in the United States of these countries, their peoples and their possibilities.

In discussing this great subject, it is in order to make a few observations in regard to the meaning of the Panama Canal. In studying the effect of that mighty waterway, it is a mistake to think only of the countries and the commerce which will be reached through and beyond the canal. We must also think of the countries and the commerce on the road to the canal from the Gulf and Atlantic seaboard of the United States. It is not generally appreciated in the hasty judgment of the passing observer that eleven Latin-American countries are tributary to either the Gulf of Mexico or the Caribbean Sea which form the great basin approaches to the canal. The ports of these countries have heretofore been, to a considerable degree, in a commercial pocket or cul-de-sac, but they are all beginning to feel a new life as a result of being taken from this pocket or cul-de-sac and placed upon a great avenue of international trade and travel. The student who has watched the history of the Gulf and Caribbean coast line is profoundly impressed with the changes which have come in the last few years as a result of the building of the canal and of the expectations of what will follow its opening.

Looking beyond the canal, with reference to Latin America and without considering the commerce of the entire Pacific Ocean, valued at \$4,000,000,000, and having tributary to it nearly 1,000,000,000 of the world's population, we note that twelve of the countries of Central and South America either have a coast line upon the Pacific Ocean or are tributary to it. There is a reach of 8000 miles from northwest to southeast or from the California-Mexico line to the Straits of Magellan. While many differ with me as to the future growth and possibilities of this western coast, I am convinced that the opening of the Panama Canal will have the same influence on it that the building of the trans-continental railways had upon California, Oregon and

Washington. It was not long ago that these three states of the United States were regarded as almost barren and impossible of supporting large populations. There is a corresponding opinion among some critics of the western shore countries of Central and South America, but I can not understand how a man, who has intimately studied them as I have, can come to any other conclusion than that they have extraordinary possibilities of material, economic, industrial and agricultural development. The change will not come at once, and may not come for some years, but eventually it will come to such an extent as to confound the skeptical persons of the present.

You ask me before I close to say a word in regard to Mexico. While I can not discuss the political situation or the pros and cons of the attitude of the present administration, I can, as an international officer having in mind the peace and welfare of the whole western continent, raise my voice against war with Mexico. "Lest we forget" should be constantly our motto in considering this problem. We must bear in mind that this struggle of Mexico is not a war against the United States but is a civil struggle. We must not forget that the United States, from 1861 to 1865 carried on the greatest civil war in the history of the western hemisphere and that was followed by ten years of awful reconstruction. In our civil war more lives were lost and more property destroyed than in all the revolutions of Latin America put together for the last twenty-five years. We must remember that where one American has lost his life in Mexico hundreds of Mexicans have lost their lives; that where one American family has suffered, hundreds of Mexican families have suffered, and where one dollar of American money has been lost, hundreds of dollars of Mexican money and property have been lost or destroyed. We must not overlook the fact, moreover, that a war with Mexico might mean a bloody struggle in which thousands of our best men would be killed and as a result of which an enormous pension list would be established that would go on for the next fifty years. It might also develop a feeling of hostility not only in Mexico but throughout all Latin America against us which would counteract all the work of the past ten years for Pan-Ameri-

can accord and defeat corresponding efforts in the future. Let us go slow and with sincere piety pray that peace may come in Mexico without war between it and the United States. If the Mexican question can be settled as a result of a kindly and sympathetic attitude on the part of the United States, there is no limit to the degree of Pan-American commerce and comity which will be developed not only between the United States and Mexico but between the United States and all the other republics of the western hemisphere.

In conclusion, permit me to observe that, if what I have said here, arouses greater and further interest, among my hearers or readers, in the countries of Latin America, I hope they will not hesitate to get in touch with the Pan-American Union, of which I have the honor to be the executive officer. As many of you have been so busy with your various activities that you have not followed with detail the work and scope of this organization, I will define it to you in a single sentence. The Pan-American Union is the international organization, with its central office in Washington, of all the twenty-one American republics, devoted to the development and advancement of friendship, good understanding, mutual acquaintance and commerce among them all, supported by their joint contributions based upon population, controlled by a governing board consisting of the diplomatic representatives in Washington of the Latin-American countries and the secretary of state of the United States, administered by a director-general chosen by this board and therefore performing the functions of an international officer rather than those of an officer of any particular country, and who, in turn, is assisted by a large staff of international experts, statisticians, commercial specialists, editors, translators, compilers, librarians, et al. Having its home in a building erected through the generosity of Mr. Carnegie and described by the greatest living French architect as "possessing beauty of architecture and nobility of purpose more than any other public building of its cost in the world," it invites every man of this wide world who may be interested in Pan-American development or Pan-American history to come within its doors and make use of its facilities.